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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 STATE 120250

SIPDIS  
DOT FOR OST (SMCDERMOTT)  
DOT FOR OITT (CWILSON-HUNTER)  
TSA FOR OGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2029  
TAGS: [AO](#) [EAIR](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: TRANSPORT MINISTER TELLS WASHINGTON  
ANGOLA'S READY TO MOVE AHEAD, NOW!

REF: SECSTATE 120241

Classified By: EEB/TRA/OTP Office Director Daniel  
[1](#)K. Moore for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) This cable contains an action request.  
Please see paragraph 2.

Summary and Action Request  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Angolan Minister of Transportation August da Silva Tomas and a delegation of Government of Angola transportation figures discussed future cooperation in support of expanded U.S.-Angola aviation links with USG aviation officials November 4. The Department of Transportation hosted the interagency gathering following Tomas' meeting with DOT Secretary LaHood (Reftel). Tomas emphatically stated Angola's commitment to cooperation, welcomed planned training and assessment visits by Transportation Security Administration teams, and sought to portray Angola as turning a new page in its aviation sector. His USG hosts explained in detail the steps necessary to launch planned and perspective new aviation services between Angola and the United States. TSA, who must still complete a number of assessments and other engagements with Angola to determine when Delta Air Lines' planned new service to Luanda can begin, pressed Tomas to quickly name points of contact to arrange a December training mission and a follow-up assessment in January of Luanda's removed airport. Post is asked to remain in contact with Tomas' ministry to assure that the needed POCs are named as soon as possible.

Both Sides Ready to Do the Needful  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) In their November 4 meeting, Department of Transportation's Susan McDermott told Angolan Transportation Minister Augusto da Silva Tomas that U.S. authorities recognize that the U.S.-Angola air service market is underserved and there is interest to initiate service by both U.S. carriers and Angola's national airline TAAG. McDermott, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs, said that addressing Angola's aviation safety and

security standards would be key to any new services. She expressed hope that TAAG, in the near future, will apply to fly to the United States. She also noted that the United States and Angola have worked together in the past in support of air services, noting that Angola was an original Safe Skies for Africa country, and offered that the United States was committed to continuing this collaboration.

¶4. (SBU) Minister Tomas responded with his personal commitment to cooperation and to meeting international standards of safety and security. He acknowledged past problems and said Angola is constantly working to improve its performance and meet the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Tomas said that some of Angola's shortcomings have been due to a lack of qualified personnel, but it is now seeking partners to address the problems. He noted in particular the importance his government places on a strategic partnership with the United States, stating that the time is now to break with the past and turn a new page of modernization for Angola. The Minister said Angola is eager to see direct flights

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established between Angola and the United States, both by Delta Air Lines in the near term and, in time, by TAAG.

¶5. (SBU) Tomas said Angola is currently building two new airports to ICAO and International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards. The Minister emphasized that he wanted to know where Angola stands now in the eyes of U.S. authorities and requested the help of USG experts to identify what Angola must do to address our concerns. Angola's new aviation legislation had been modeled on U.S. laws, he said. Angola's goal is to achieve and maintain new national standards consistent with those of ICAO and IATA, and he asked for U.S. training to effectively and quickly implement international regulations and standards. He added that, in addition to seeking out advice and help from its international partners, Angola is also buying the equipment it needs, such as radar to cover the whole country, and is training its people accordingly; for example, sending trainees to South Africa, France and Brazil.

¶6. (SBU) McDermott welcomed Tomas, request for cooperation to achieve direct flights, saying that significant issues of aviation security and safety would need to be addressed. Minister Tomas conceded this and responded "Let's get going, the time has come to build a modern industry." Susan McDermott noted that Angola had previously indicated that it requires a bilateral agreement to allow air services with the United States to be established and that a draft memorandum of understanding has been given to Angola for its consideration. The USG looked forward to a response, she said, noting that Delta Air Lines hopes to begin direct service in June 2010, so finalization of the MOU must be done quickly. Minister Tomas indicated that he believed the June 2010 date could be met.

¶7. (SBU) According to Tomas, the next 6 months will be decisive for Angola's plans for a revived and expanded aviation sector. In the next two months work would be finished on the

two new airports, in time for the African Cup of Nations soccer games that Angola will host beginning in January. In support of this, as well as the push to facilitate both the Delta flights and expanded service to Europe, Angola is striving to meet all ICAO and IATA standards and recommended practices (SARPS) and requirements made by the European Union in agreeing to remove TAAG from the EU "black list." He said he feels the six-month timeframe is realistic. He noted that Angola's president is backing all these reforms. Tomas asked his U.S. hosts to provide contacts from all relevant USG agencies so that his own government's authorities could establish partnerships to maintain the momentum of the needed reforms.

18. (C) The minister said he promised that he would not return to the United States except on a direct flight, preferably on TAAG, though he conceded that TAAG had numerous hurdles to clear before it could fly to the United States, and he did not indicate that, in the short term, TAAG would be focused on the United States. Tomas also took the opportunity to tell the group that he would be traveling to Seattle to visit Boeing, the visit related to the planned purchase of two new planes for TAAG. According to Tomas, TAAG only flies Boeing aircraft and this would remain so.

#### Security Overview (TSA)

19. (SBU) The security issues at the heart of the USG's decision making regarding Delta's proposed service to Luanda were addressed by the Transportation Security Administration's

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(TSA) Rob Rottman and Carlos De La Torre. Rottman, the director of international operations in TSA's Office of Global Strategies, congratulated Tomas on the vast progress Angola had made in its security practices and infrastructure since TSA last assessed them in 2007. An August 2009 assessment undertaken in support of Delta's plans had found less than ten outstanding problems, none of them insurmountable. Areas of concern that remain include: approval of relevant national security programs; access control at the airport, including airport staff screening and ID display; aircraft security and passenger movement control; screening of passengers and cabin baggage; status of new airport security screening equipment; requirement for agreement on deployment of air marshals; and concurrence for requested MANPADS assistance visit.

10. (SBU) De La Torre requested points of contact (POCs) to set up a schedule in early December (the week of the 13th or prior) to train Angolan security specialists on U.S. standards and practices. TSA also requested a follow-up security assessment sometime in January to help Angola close the outstanding security concerns. De La Torre specifically noted that TSA wants to look closely at airport screening checkpoints, x-ray screening equipment, and passenger flows within the newly renovated Luanda airport. Additionally, TSA requested an update on the Angolan government's response to the proposed Federal Air Marshals Memorandum of Understanding and a MANPADS

assistance visit.

¶11. (SBU) The Minister promised to respond to the TSA letters on a FAM MOU and MANPADS visit upon his return to Luanda and to provide points of contact for follow-up. He was also eager to get the training underway, requesting that it might be done prior to the December 13th date. He emphasized that Angola is in a hurry to deal with its problems, and move forward. He said that several of the areas identified by the TSA assessment as needing corrections were already being addressed. Specifically he cited airport access control, saying that 90% of the open access points, faulted by the TSA assessment, have already been closed.

¶12. (SBU) The Minister acknowledged TSA,s concerns about Angola,s national airport security program, and said that Angola would cooperate with TSA to resolve failings. The Minister also requested to combine the training and security visits in order to expedite the process. In response, TSA said it would try to accommodate his request.

#### Safety Overview (FAA)

¶13. (SBU) FAA representative Emily White, acting manager of the Flight Standards Service, International Policy and Programs Division, provided a detailed, generic summary of the FAA,s International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) process. She explained the reasoning and requirements behind the IASA process. While noting that until such time as an Angolan-registered airline such as TAAG applied for permission to fly to the United States, or to code share with a U.S. airline, the FAA would not -- nor have a need to -- conduct an IASA, White laid out the criteria that the FAA would assess during an IASA, stressing in particular the need for proper carrier licensing according to ICAO standards. Minister Tomas replied that this too will become part of Angola,s overall work plan. (Note: Following this meeting, the Minister was traveling to Montreal to meet with ICAO and IATA. End Note.) McDermott added that an IASA audit is a very formal and demanding

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process, but that the U.S. Government would be willing to provide technical assistance in the form of a technical review on a cost-reimbursable basis as an initial step.

¶14. (SBU) In closing the meeting, McDermott thanked her guests for the enthusiastic and committed tone of the meeting. The Minister responded that "Angola likes exams, because only the bad students dislike being tested;" underscoring his personal commitment to meeting safety and security standards, and to further opening the Angolan market to U.S. air service providers.  
CLINTON